

January 13, 2004

The Honorable H. Charles Royce, Chairman  
Resources, Recreation and Development Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 305  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

**Re: HB 1131, requiring the department of environmental services to study the cost effectiveness of programs to control exotic aquatic weeds and to examine alternatives**

Dear Chairman Royce:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1131, which would require the Department of Environmental Services (DES) to study the cost effectiveness of existing programs to control exotic aquatic weeds and to examine alternative methods of control or prevention. We see this as an opportunity to both study existing and alternative control methods and provide additional information to the legislature on the state's existing exotic aquatic weed control program.

DES is directed under RSA 487:17, II to prevent the introduction and further dispersal of exotic aquatic weeds and to manage or control exotic aquatic weed infestations in the surface waters of the state. To do this we have developed, and continue to make improvements to, a comprehensive exotic aquatic plant control program that is a leader in New England. The foundation of the program is a three-part strategy to (1) stop the spread of exotic aquatic weeds through education and outreach, including signage at all boat ramps (in partnership with the Fish and Game Department) and a Lake Host program (in partnership with the New Hampshire Lakes Association) at numerous boat ramps to inspect boats and educate boaters; (2) train and empower volunteer Weed Watchers to detect new infestations so they can be controlled before they become established; and (3) provide temporary control of existing infestations through a matching grants program for milfoil control projects. Under RSA 487, this work is funded by fees on boat registrations. Specifics of program activities are provided in the *Report of the New Hampshire Exotic Aquatic Species Program* that presents program activities and costs and also discusses weed prevention and control techniques (copy enclosed).

If HB 1131 is enacted, DES will conduct a research project to evaluate the technical and cost effectiveness of current control methods (primarily hand-pulling and bottom barriers for new infestations, and herbicide treatments for existing infestations), as well as potential new or innovative techniques not currently used in New Hampshire.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment. Please call either me at 271-3503 or Paul Currier at 271-3289 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

Michael P. Nolin  
Commissioner

cc: Representative Richard Drisko